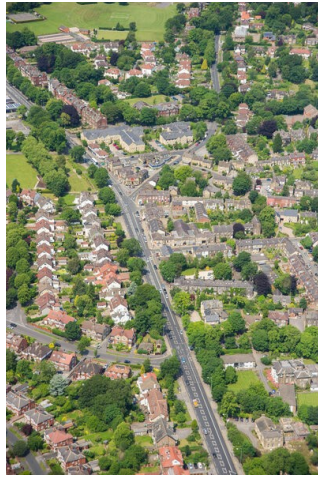


THE OTLEY WALK

HEADINGLEY



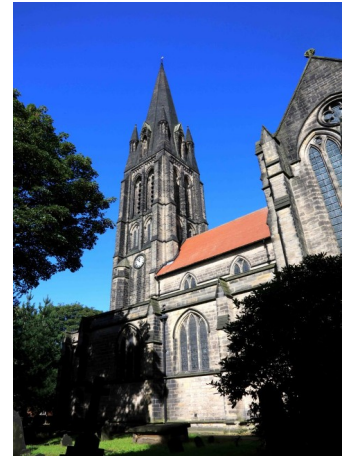
Far Headingley



West Park

The Otley Walk follows Otley Road through Headingley towards Otley. From Headingley village, it travels north through what was once a rural landscape, and is still very green due to the number of trees along the Road. It visits a couple of dozen Listed Buildings [*asterisked, see Appendix 2]. And it is a leisurely walk of three miles, calling at a number of independent cafes en route for refreshments. For an easy view, buses also run along the route, though not all go all the way. Service 1 terminates at Lawnswood Roundabout (but Service 1B turns off Otley Road, to Headingley Campus). Services 6 and 8 both run all the way up to Lawnswood Roundabout, and thence to Holt Park. Service 27 goes as far as West Park roundabout, where it turns off to Guiseley. And Service 28 turns off in Far Headingley, up Weetwood Lane to Adel. Service X84 goes all the way to Otley but is a boarding-only service until it passes Lawnswood roundabout.

What is now the Otley Road begins at what was once the Headingley village green. Originally, the main route from Leeds to Otley bypassed Headingley altogether (it ran through Burley, through Cookridge, over the Chevin and down into Otley). Then from 1755, for a hundred years, a new turnpike road ran from Leeds to Otley, through Headingley, known as the Leeds Otley Turnpike. But once Leeds Corporation took over the turnpike (in 1866), the road took its present names, becoming Woodhouse Lane and Headingley Lane - and from Headingley village onwards, Otley Road.



St Michael's Church

Headingley village itself is of Anglo-Saxon origin, at least: its name means 'Headda's people's place'. And the village green was an open triangle between the church and the two pubs. Between the pubs stands a young oak tree, a replacement for the original oak, the Shire Oak or Skyrack, the meeting place for the Skyrack Wapentake in Viking times. The first church on the green was built in 1619, but it was replaced in 1838, and then again in 1886, as the population of Headingley expanded. It was built in Gothic Revival style, designed by JL Pearson, and is dedicated to St Michael & All Angels*. The Original Oak pub* is almost as old as the church. In the late eighteenth century it was extended,



Original Oak



Skyrack

benefiting from the trade brought by the new turnpike road. It was joined about that time by the Skyrack*, also benefiting from the turnpike trade. [See Appendix 1 for more info on the pubs.] About the same time, a school was built next to the church; it was rebuilt in the nineteenth century, and is now the Parish Hall*. A remnant of the village green survives in front of the Hall. In the twentieth century, there were two more notable additions to the old green. The war memorial* was put up after the Great War, designed by Sidney Kitson, in white Portland stone with bronze decorative motifs. And opposite the memorial are three historic telephone boxes*, of Type K6, designed in cast iron in 1935 by Sir Giles Gilbert Scott.

From the village green, the first stretch of Otley Road runs through the shops of Headingley Town Centre [listed on the Shopping Centres page, see Appendix 1]. It passes Shire Oak Road on the right (named after the same oak as the pubs, and leading to Headingley Hall, site of Headingley's original manor house) and then Bennett Road on the left. On the right, just past Shire Oak Street, is a parade of four shops, built in 1877, among the first purpose-built shops in Headingley. At the following cross-roads, North Lane leads left, past Headingley Stadium, down Kirkstall Hill, to Kirkstall Bridge over the River Aire. To the right, Wood Lane, originally Oil Mill Lane, runs to the site of an old mill on Meanwood Beck.



Headingley Methodist Church



Alma Cottages

Over the cross-roads, the right (east) side of the Road is dominated by the mass of the Arndale Centre, now called Headingley Central, built in 1965 on the site of a villa named St Ronans. The Centre is however home to a cafe, the **21 Co Gallery and Coffee Shop**, a first opportunity for a break in the walk. Opposite, the other (west) side of the Road has a richer history. First is Headingley Methodist Church and hall*, built originally in 1840-45 by James Simpson in Gothic Revival style, subsequently extended and remodelled. Then, over Chapel Street, is a notable mid-nineteenth century terrace of three houses*, nos 69-73 Otley Road. Beyond the terrace stand Alma Cottages*, a short street of four distinctive pairs of cottages, built about 1860 in Gothic Revival style. Between the two pairs on the left are privies (now potting sheds) embellished with battlements! Like Alma Road opposite, the Cottages were named after the Battle of Alma, 1854, the first battle of the

Crimean War. Further along, on the same side, past Dennistead Crescent, is a row of shops and offices*, 79-83 Otley Road, formerly four houses built early in the nineteenth century, with single-storey eighteenth century outbuildings to the right. The car park next door has a fine newly-built stone wall. Back on the east side of the Road is another parade, including the **Bowery**, beside the cross-roads, another opportunity for a coffee break.

Beyond the crossroads, Otley Road runs on to Far Headingley village, originally between the common of Headingley Moor on the right and open fields on the left (where there are still traces of pre-Conquest cultivation in Beckett Park). These fields were among the lands granted by the Conqueror to one of his barons, whose grandson in turn gave Headingley and land in Meanwood to Kirkstall Abbey. To access Meanwood, the monks built a bridge over Meanwood Beck – hence, the right-hand turn of the crossroads leading to the bridge was named Monk Bridge Road. Later, solicitor (and Mayor of Leeds) John Hope Shaw built Shaw House* on the road, which was subsequently named Shaw Lane (as far as the junction with Moor Road).



Holly Dene



151 Otley Road

Meanwhile, an Act of Parliament of 1829 provided for the enclosure of Headingley Moor (and the loss of the common land) and for his house, John Hope Shaw acquired one of the earliest plots sold. Holly Dene* at 58 Otley Road had already been built, in the late eighteenth century, as the Parsonage for Headingley. But Burton Crescent just beyond gave access for the development of the plots on the Moor later in the nineteenth century. The fields to the left (west) of Otley Road survived longer. St Chad's Drive opposite the Crescent was originally the drive to New Grange, a farming outpost of Kirkstall Abbey. After the Dissolution of the Monasteries, the Grange was acquired by the Wade family, who laid the park, and then by the Becketts, who gave it its name. The fields between the park and Otley Road were farmed from Parkside Farm until, through the 1930s, they were steadily developed for housing (and the farm was demolished). Now St Chad's Drive leads to the The Grange* on the Headingley Campus of Leeds Beckett University, but the lodge and gateposts built by the Becketts at its entrance still stand at 151 Otley Road*. And nearby is a cast-iron horse trough*, a reminder of the horse-drawn traffic, including buses and trams, which once dominated the Road.

Otley Road now arrives in Far Headingley village, originally known as Headingley Moor Side, on the right side of the Road. The village expanded significantly following the Enclosure Act of 1829. First of all, there are eight houses on Victoria Terrace* standing at right angles to the main road, built in the mid-nineteenth century. They are followed by Cottage Road on the right, one of a number of roads laid as part of the enclosure, and named after the cottages intended to be built, and now home to the oldest cinema in Headingley. To the right of Cottage Road is the New Inn, opened following the enclosure; above the entrance, a clockface bears the legend 'no tick', reminding even the best customers that there's no drinking on the landlord's credit!



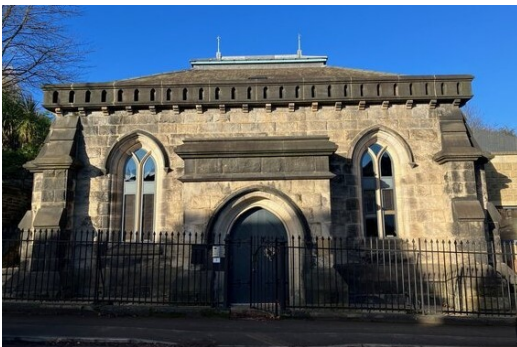
Victoria Terrace



St Chad's Gardens

A row of shops then leads to Park Terrace, with **Loaf** cafe on the corner [again, see Appendix 1 for Far Headingley shops]. On the opposite corner, Walter Bennett ran a butcher's shop (now a dry cleaner), whence his son Alan attended Lawnswood School. Behind the dry cleaner is **Fika North** coffee bar, with Weetwood Lane branching off to the right. In the fork is the Three Horseshoes pub, opened when John Askey bought one of the enclosure plots in 1832: the pub flourished as the village expanded, especially once the first regular bus service in Leeds chose the pub as its terminus. Just along Otley Road is a third pub, opened fifty years later, The Woodman (now Woodies) [for more info on the pubs, see Appendix 1]. Over St Chad's Road is St Chad's Court sheltered housing, built on the site of the bus garage (built as a tram depot in 1935, became the bus garage in 1956, demolished in 1992) [see Appedix 1 for more info on Headingley's buses and trams]. Beyond Hollin Road is St Chad's Gardens*, 114-120 Otley Road, an imposing terrace of four houses, built in Jacobean style in 1885, displaying the faience products of the Burmantofts pottery. A little further up Otley Road, at 126-130, is Ascot Grange Hotel: the building was originally called St Chad's Villas, and was once the home of Arthur Ransome.

Across the Road from the village is St Chad's Church*. It was built in 1868 by Edmund Beckett Denison in Gothic Revival style, when a new parish was established, and parish and village were newly named 'Far Headingley'. The War Memorial* in front of the church was built after the Great War. The church was built on land given by the Beckett estate, and the housing on either side was developed in the Inter-War period on the fields of the estate. Just up Otley Road, at no201, is an old school building (now a nursery) built on the site of Ivy House Farm, which farmed those fields.



Meter House



Spenfield

Beyond Far Headingley village, Otley Road rises up what is sometimes known as Reservoir Hill. And indeed, this next part of the Road is dominated by waterworks. After Drummond Road and Drummond Avenue on the left, the Road passes Church Wood Avenue, and a few yards up the Avenue, on the right-hand side, is the first of these works, a meter house* built in Gothic Revival style by Leeds Corporation Waterworks between 1905 and 1912. (The Avenue continues to the Headingley Campus of Leeds Beckett

University.). Opposite the Avenue is Glen Road, whence the Road rises up the hill. On the right is a small lodge, now derelict (with an intrepid silver birch growing out of its roof). It was built when Leeds Waterworks Company constructed Weetwood Reservoir, 1837-43, for the first time providing Leeds with piped clean water. The Company was taken over by Leeds Corporation in 1852, then by the Yorkshire Water Authority (1973), now by Yorkshire Water (1989), and the reservoir still operates as Headingley Water Treatment Works. Beyond the entrance to the Works is another, larger lodge, built when the reservoir was expanded in the 1860s, it's now private accommodation at 178 Otley Road. Across the Road is a large housing estate, Central Park. As with all the land west of the Road, this was originally fields in the Beckett estate, at its northern end. In 1905, the fields were sold to the Corporation as a site for additional filter beds, which fed the meter house (which in turn piped clean water through Headingley down to the reservoir on Woodhouse Moor, for distribution to the town). Eventually, the western filter beds became redundant, when new plant was installed in the 1990s, the site was sold for housing, and Central Park was developed from 2000 onwards. Further along Otley Road, on the right, stands Spensfield, also for fifty years part of the waterworks. The grand house* was built in 1875 in neo-Gothic style by the local architect George Corson, along with the lodge* at the entrance (no180) and the coach house* further up the Road (no184, now a physiotherapy clinic). Spensfield was bought by the Corporation in 1948 and used thereafter as offices for the Waterworks. In 1995, Yorkshire Water sold the grounds and the Village Hotel and Gym were built, and then the house was sold in 1997 and converted to apartments.



West Park Shops



West Park Roundabout

Opposite Spensfield, Otley Road passes Ancaster Road, Welburn Drive and Welburn Grove, arriving at West Park. The suburb was developed in the Edwardian era, with a fine parade of shops [see Appendix 1], on fields sold by the Cardigan estate. The parade includes two more cafes, both inviting a visit, either [West Park Lounge](#) or **West Park Cafe**. Beyond the parade, to the left, stands a building notable for its spire – this is in fact, a pair of semi-detached houses, the left of which was the home of JRR Tolkien while he was Professor at the University of Leeds (it's marked by a blue plaque). Otley Road has now arrived at the West Park roundabout. At this point, the original turnpike veered left, along an old lane, now Spen Road (joining Otley Old Road in Cookridge) (Spen Road itself led to Moor Grange, originally another farm outpost of Kirkstall Abbey). Otley Road now however follows the right fork from the roundabout, which was laid when the route of the turnpike was amended in the early 1800s, to join Otley Old Road at Lawnswood.

The final stretch of the present Otley Road runs to Leeds Outer Ring Road. After a couple of hundred yards, the road becomes a dual carriageway, the central green reservation was where the trams used to run, until they were discontinued in 1956. On the left is Lawnswood School. The present building dates from 2003, but two separate schools, Leeds Modern School for Boys and Lawnswood High School for Girls, moved to the site in 1932; they merged in 1972, and became a comprehensive school the following year. Opposite the school is the west lodge for Weetwood Hall. The lodge* was built in 1887 by WH Thorp for the then owner of the Hall, printing magnate Alf Cooke.



Lawnswood School



Weetwood Hall Lodge

A short drive leads from the lodge to Weetwood Hall* itself, the oldest building around Headingley, built in 1625 for Daniel Foxcroft (though the site originated in the Middle Ages). It has been extended in every century since. The Hall was bought by the University of Leeds in 1919, and used as a hall of residence. Since 1993, it has been a hotel and conference centre. It's now the Weetwood Hall Estate, which includes **The Stables** pub* – which also serves coffee, and is perhaps a good place to finish the Otley Walk.



Weetwood Hall



The Stables

Beyond Lawnswood, the turnpike was rerouted via Bramhope in 1842, so the main road to Otley now continues for a couple of miles through Adel, and past the gates of Golden Acre Park, where it changes from Otley Road to Leeds Road. To return to Headingley Centre from Lawnswood roundabout, catch a bus at the stop by the lodge, on Services 1, 6 and 8 returning to Leeds (but not Service X84, which is alighting only).

A companion walk, A Listed Lane, follows Headingley Lane south of Headingley Centre.

Dr Richard Tyler, Headingley Development Trust, 2024

Appendix 1: Further Information

For photos of Otley Road and Headingley Lane, now and in the past, see the galleries, [*A660*](#) and [*Headingley Highway*](#).

For the historical context, see the books by Eveleigh Bradford, *Headingley* (2008) and David Hall, *Far Headingley, Weetwood and West Park* (2000).

For photos of the neighbourhoods the walk passes through, see the galleries for [*Historic Headingley Centre*](#), for [*Historic Far Headingley*](#) and for [*Historic West Park*](#).

For particular topics, see the pages for [*Historic Pubs*](#), for [*Headingley Cinemas*](#), for [*Headingley Omnibus*](#) (for buses and trams), for [*People in Headingley*](#) (for local authors) and for [*Shopping Centres*](#).

For links to the entries on the Listed Buildings on the [Historic England website](#) see Appendix 2 below.

Appendix 2: Listed Buildings

Church of St Michael: [1255967](#)

Original Oak pub: [1375311](#)

Skyrack pub: [1375304](#)

Headingley Parish Hall: [1256120](#)

War Memorial: [1256122](#)

Telephone Kiosks: [1255941](#)

Headingley Methodist Church: [1375309](#)

69-73 Otley Road: [1375305](#)

Alma Cottages: [1256556](#), [1256560](#), [1256563](#), [1256580](#), [1256586](#),

79-83 Otley Road: [1375307](#)

Shaw House: [1256077](#)

Holly Dene: [1375296](#)

151 Otley Road: [1375298](#)

Horse Trough: [1375310](#)

The Grange: [1256304](#)

Victoria Terrace: [1375303](#)

Church of St Chad: [1375301](#)

War Memorial: [1375302](#)

114-120 Otley Road: [1375297](#)

Water Works Meter House: [1255566](#)

Spensfield: [1375329](#)

Spensfield Lodge: [1375327](#)

Spensfield Coach House: [1375328](#)

Weetwood Hall Lodge: [1375331](#)

Weetwood Hall: [1375330](#)

Weetwood Hall Stables: [1375371](#)



Otley Road, in Headingley

For more walks in and around Headingley, go to the [Walk](#) page.